

Lazarus the Lizard

A Tall Tale by Mr. G

“Leapin Lizards!” was an shriek frequently yelled by Little Orphan Annie whenever she got into a tough predicament. Well, this tale is not about Little Orphan Annie, but it’s about Lazarus the Lizard.

Now Lazarus was a small and sweet and loveable little chap when little Mary Jean Markle brought him/her....er....whatever, to live in the glass tank with the other critters in Mrs. Dickinson’s science classroom. The kids in Mrs. Dickinson’s room immediately adored the lively rascal who entertained them by jumping around the tank and coming to the glass and grinning at anyone who leaned over to gaze at him. He’d munch on the little plants and other items placed in the tank. The rest of the residents of the tank, on the other hand, were not so entertained; in fact they were annoyed. Lazarus began to grow. He seemed to need an extraordinary amount of food because he was growing at an amazing pace. Then he started to munch on the other occupants, sometimes to the delight or the horror of the kid who was watching. The kids, as usual, over-fed Lazarus, but it was a good thing because – He Really Needed It!

It had been about three days when one and all watched as he endlessly grew. I’d say he was about three inches long on the day he arrived. But after those three days, he must have been a foot and a half long! His color changed a bit. He now had a sort of bluish, purple hew. He was could barely fit in the tank! Yep, he grew at an amazing speed!!

Lazarus really loved those kids, and they loved him. But Mrs. Dickinson soon became worried about the incredible growth of the loveable lizard. It was Friday that she vowed that she would make her concerns known to the principal, Mrs. Tammy Trumpeter. She knew that she’d understand what to do. As the kids filed out of Mrs. Dickinson’s classroom, they all waved and said goodbye to Lazarus as he displayed his usual grin. On Monday morning, Mrs. Trumpeter would be told about their loveable lizard. She’d surely know what to do because, she was the principal!

On Monday morning, Mrs. Dickinson was running a bit late and some of the students arrived in her classroom before she did. What they saw created quite a shock! Lazarus had grown too huge to fit in the tank. He must have been six feet long. The tank was broken; there were no signs of the other creatures. Lazarus must have had them for dinner. You’d think that Lazarus would be frightening to the kids who just entered the classroom; just the opposite. He had that delightful grin on his face; you could say it was enchanting! By the time Mrs. Dickinson got to the room, three kids were on Lazarus’s back like a carnival ride. Naturally, she shrieked and fainted. Hearing the scream, Mr. Harris came across the hall to see what the commotion was all about. Mr. Harris called Mrs. Moran to help Mrs. Dickinson. All the while, the kids and the lizard were frolicking in the front of the room. Mrs. Trumpeter was summoned. As an experienced school principal, she had a natural way with wildlife. She had grown up on a farm and raised catfish as a member of the 4-H Club. Nevertheless, Mrs. Trumpeter understood that Lazarus could no longer stay in Mrs. Dickinson’s room. She called the mayor to inform him of the events going on in her school. All the while, Lazarus kept growing and growing. That afternoon, a Mayflower moving van arrived. Lazarus was herded toward the door. It was a tight fit, but he barely made it through.

By now, all the kids in the school knew about Lazarus and the excitement seemed to buzz everywhere. As the large leathery reptile was loaded onto the moving van about 100 kids were peering out of the windows and doors. The familiar grin on the mouth of Lazarus turned to a frown. He was sad to be leaving all of the friends he had made in Mrs. Dickinson's room. Even so, Lazarus obediently climbed the ramp, which sagged under his ever-increasing weight, to the rear of the rear of the van. Once inside, he turned to take a last glimpse of the pals he had made. He saw their tears and knew that he'd be missed. Then, his frown turned to his familiar grin and his tail popped into the air. I swear, it looked like he was giving a "thumbs up!" Since he didn't have a thumb, all he could do was raise his tail. Now, hundreds of kids were cheering and waving good bye as the taillights of the van were all that could be seen at the end of the school's driveway.

It must have been months, or nearly a year had gone by. We hadn't heard about Lazarus but we had not forgotten about him either. The kids in Mrs. Dickinson's class were now in the 7th grade. They all had different teachers and were in different classes. Sometimes during lunch the topic of Lazarus would come up and the kids would fondly remember the amphibian that briefly entered their lives.

It was years later when a film was released that featured large lizards. It was a scary movie that kept the movie watchers cringing in their seats. Towards the end of the movie, the climaxing scene saw two velociraptors chasing a couple of little kids around the main lobby of a new amusement park. You guessed it, the park was "Jurassic Park." Then I saw him! The loveable lizard that was raised and held dear in Mrs. Dickinson's room was right there; snarling and roaring and making lunch of those two velociraptors. I knew it was Lazarus! – I could never forget him! And as he made a meal of the last of the two dinosaurs, he looked towards the audience, like he did from the tank in Mrs. Dickinson's room, and beamed that familiar smile.

After that, we knew Lazarus had made the big time. He went on to appear in several more sequel movies. I heard that his agent was working on a contract for Lazarus to star in his own film – *Lazarus the Purple Dinosaur and Friends Go to School*. 😊

The End